

Advent forgiveness
A time of peacemaking p. 6

Prayer for a bike
The sign said welcome p. 10

Evening to remember
Russians venerate poets p. 11

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Canadian network protests sweat shops

Alan Doerksen

TORONTO — A Toronto-based agency is concerned that many types of clothing and footwear sold in Canada are produced under inhumane conditions in Canada and other countries. To address this problem, the Maquila Solidarity Network (MSN) is educating Canadians about companies that run "sweat shops" and is encouraging North Americans to take action against companies that are exploiting their workers.

The Spanish word "maquila" refers to a factory (in Mexico or Latin America) that produces clothes for export. "They're usually not under the regular employment standards of the country," explains Lynda Yanz, co-ordinator of the network. In some parts of Asia, there are similar factories in areas known as "export processing zones."

These factories, commonly called sweat shops, have poor working conditions and pay low wages. Yanz says sweat shop workers are "predominantly



A "sweat shop fashion show" staged recently outside of Toronto's Eaton Centre.

women working at less than their country's minimum wage."

Lack of justice

MSN believes sweat-shop conditions are encouraged by multinational companies such as

Nike, which Yanz singles out as a company which treats its overseas workers unfairly. According to MSN, Nike pays \$20 million a year to basketball star Michael Jordan as an endorsement fee, but only \$811 a year (about

\$2.60 a day) as the salary of a Nike factory worker in Indonesia, who may have to work up to 14 hours a day.

To encourage Canadians to take action on this issue, MSN has produced a Wear Fair Action Kit, which explains the issues at stake and gives suggestions on how to bring about change.

In the kit, MSN encourages Nike to "Do It Just," a variation of their motto "Just Do It."

By producing sneakers in countries such as Indonesia, Nike is taking advantage of low wages in those countries, asserts Yanz. "I think their motivation is to increase their profits.... If we're wearing Nike shoes, we expect they have the control and responsibility that they're produced under just conditions."

MSN is also critical of the Woolworth Northern Group, which markets clothes under brand names such as Northern Reflections. MSN says the

Northern Group pays only \$4.50 an hour (65 per cent of the Ontario minimum wage) to Ontario women who sew clothes at home.

Ask questions

MSN encourages concerned people to take action in a number of ways. One is by asking a store clerk or manager questions when shopping for clothes, such as:

- How does your company guarantee your clothes are produced under humane conditions?

- Do you have a code of conduct? Can I have a copy?

If they can't answer these questions, MSN suggests contacting manufacturers, by phone or letter, directly. "The more the managers realize consumers are concerned, the more they'll send the message back to wherever those clothes are coming from," Yanz asserts.

A creative approach taken recently by the Labour Behind the Label Coalition and the Homeworkers Association was to put on a "sweat shop fashion show," which protested Woolworth's working conditions for its homeworkers. The show involved people dressing in clothing with oversized labels and signs which pointed out the difference between the retail costs and labor costs.

The result of this was a meeting between these two groups. See CONSUMERS page 2...

London mayor wins the election of her convictions

Debora Van Brenk

LONDON — London's mayor, who sat out the final three weeks of her bid for re-election because of a protest of principle, has won back her seat with more than twice the votes of her closest rival.

Dianne Haskett, a professed Christian, defeated veteran politician and deputy mayor Grant Hopcroft in one of the most unusual and controversial municipal races in the province.

And she did so decisively, despite being in voluntary seclusion during the meat of the campaign to express her protest against the Ontario Human Rights Commission. Haskett's first words to supporters during her victory speech were, "I want



Dianne Haskett

to begin by giving the glory to God for the outcome this evening." God's closeness, she said, had helped her through "the most difficult time of my life."

Action for God

First elected mayor in 1994, she found herself at the centre of conflict in 1995 when she refused to proclaim Gay Pride Weekend as requested by the Homophile Association of London Ontario (HALO).

HALO protested to the Human Rights Commission. At that hearing last summer, Haskett said proclaiming something she couldn't believe would be "like turning my back on God." When she announced her re-election bid, Haskett adopted a policy of not proclaiming "days" for any controversial group, including pro-life organizations, with whom she personally agrees.

See MAYOR page 2...

No issue next week. Look for our 1997 Christmas issue Dec. 5!

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News

Consumers urged to buy from ethical companies

... continued from page 1

and Woolworth to discuss violations of the Ontario Employment Standards Act by some of their contractors. Yanz is encouraged by this response but wants to see more action from Woolworth in improving the way the company treats homeworkers.

MSN is one of the founders of the Labour Behind the Label Coalition, which also includes the national offices of the Presbyterian and United churches, and the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops.

Yanz thinks boycotts of unethical clothing companies are not a good idea. "These campaigns have been effective without calling a boycott," she asserts.

Boycotts should not be called unless a company's workers ask for one, says Yanz. One possible negative effect of boycotts is to force a company to shut down factories, she warns. Boycotts also need a lot of consumer support to be effective, she adds.

MSN has also sent out a petition to interested groups which calls for the federal government

to set up a task force to begin discussions on how to stop sweat shop abuses and guarantee respect for basic worker rights in the garment and footwear industries in Canada and other countries.

"We're hoping by the end of January to hand over the petition to the government," says Yanz. The U.S. government already has a task force dealing with this issue, she says. "We're calling for a similar process. We'd like to learn from what goes on in the U.S."

Good support

Yanz believes Canadian consumers are willing to pay more for clothes produced under humane conditions. She quotes a 1995 consumer survey done by the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees (UNITE), which shows that 90 per cent of Canadians surveyed said they would pay at least 10 per cent more for clothes produced under humane conditions. Yanz adds that her office has received numerous letters, faxes and phone calls agreeing with this.



A consumer protests the Northern Reflections clothing company.

MSN's action kit has had a "tremendous" response, says Yanz. Every day, orders have come in from teachers, priests and community activists, she says. "It's been really gratifying to see the response."

Presbyterian World Service and Development is one of several groups that is supporting MSN financially and in spirit. Karen Plater, the agency's communications co-ordinator, says the action kit is a good idea. She believes writing to the head of-

fice of a clothing company is an especially effective method of bringing about change. Plater also thinks the federal government needs to make regulations demanding better working conditions for clothing workers.

Reward ethical companies

Unlike Yanz, Plater believes boycotts can be effective in bringing about change. One alternative is what she calls a "buy-cott": buying clothing from companies with humane working conditions. She also suggests concerned Christians "research and find out where clothes they're wearing are made."

Ten Thousand Villages (formerly SelfHelp Crafts) is an agency which markets crafts and clothing from developing countries and which promotes fair treatment of its producers. Its mission statement explains that the agency "provides vital, fair income to Third World people

by selling their handicrafts ... in North America. Ten Thousand Villages works with artisans who would otherwise be unemployed or underemployed."

Sharon Thiessen, information co-ordinator for the agency, explains that Mennonite Central Committee (MCC), which runs Ten Thousand Villages, helps to verify a reasonable wage for artisans in the 30 countries the agency buys from. The agency works directly with local producers, agrees on a price for a product and pays at least half of that ahead of time, says Thiessen. The rest is paid when the product is finished, before it is sent to North America.

Rather than setting up factories, Ten Thousand Villages usually works with small producer groups, such as families. "We work with a lot of women's groups and some disabled groups," Thiessen adds.

Thiessen has not heard of MSN but agrees that concerned consumers should ask questions about how clothing is produced, avoiding products produced in an unethical way.

Mayor sits out campaign, but wins

... continued from page 1

In October, however, the tribunal ruled against her and she, along with the city of London, was ordered to pay \$10,000 in damages to the Homophile Association of London Ontario (HALO).

She was not ordered to proclaim Gay Pride Day (although

city council will do so if asked) but she said the ruling still violated her right to free speech.

So on Oct. 20, she announced her three-week silence — symbolic, she said, of the silence she had wanted to maintain on the issue in the first place — and self-imposed removal from public life.

She would not campaign personally. She would not engage in any debates, conduct any interviews, do any official mayor's business. She would remain silent.

Money saved by not having to pay her salary for three weeks the City could apply towards paying the \$10,000 fine.

Her campaign team said she would stand on her record, rather than campaign on it.

Some criticized Haskett's walking away as undemocratic. Others suggested it was yet another discriminatory act. At all-candidates' meetings, other politicians were asked if they held any beliefs that could cause them to resign in the future.

Her lead campaign strategist resigned because of what he said was anti-gay sentiment that was growing among voters and splitting the city into two camps. A

coalition of London leaders from the political left, right and centre formed and joined in a placard-waving, speech-making protest against Haskett and in favor of Hopcroft.

Hundreds of her supporters then gathered for a wordless protest. They wrote letters and distributed campaign ribbons. Several churches organized overt campaigns to re-elect her.

The campaign, and the silent campaign, found its way into national headlines and newscasts. And in the end, Haskett won the votes of more than 61,000 Londoners.

After her victory, she harshly criticized her detractors and the media, who, she said, exploited the situation and made it seem a "gay issue" instead of a matter of her freedom to speak or remain silent.

She insisted her campaigners had tried to emphasize the election was about her record of achievements and her protest was about personal rights.

Haskett said her relationship with London's gay community remains healthy and respectful. Dan Wilson, a spokesperson for HALO, has said on election night the group is willing to

work with Haskett "to help make London a better and more tolerant place in which to live."

To those who accused her of trying to force her views on a diverse, multi-cultural city, Haskett had this to say: "I don't have a religious agenda to impose on the city. I want to work with the other members of council to seek after the prosperity of the city and I think in spite of a lot of different backgrounds on the council that we have a real opportunity to make this one of the best terms of council."

Time to reflect

Haskett, whose first term was not without other conflict, also said the self-imposed leave of absence helped her reassess her shortcomings of the past three years. She pledged to be more responsive to city councillors and create a team with common goals.

Haskett, 42, has been a member of London city council since 1991 and founded the law firm of Haskett, Menear Associates in London. She attends Metropolitan United Church, one of the largest churches in London, and is married to graphic designer Jacek Kotowicz. They

have a nine-year-old daughter.

In the 1994 election for mayor, Haskett defeated, by a little more than 1,000 votes, a seasoned politician and lay minister. During last term, she also organized a well-attended prayer breakfast.

But she has been hesitant until recently to express her faith publicly. It is a deeply personal matter, she said.

A lawyer, a believer

"I am what I am. I come into this job as a lawyer, as someone who has some business background and experience and as someone who happens to be a believer in God. And various components of what we are, I don't think, can be divorced from how we conduct ourselves in life.

"I am just one person who happens to be a believer in God. I don't think I'm any different from any other person in the city who takes time every day to pray and to try to meditate and to try to gather whatever wisdom you can for the challenges that are ahead," says Haskett.

Debora Van Brenk is a reporter with the London Free Press

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News

Christians should reach out to international students



Charlotte Hyde heads the International Student Ministry at the University of Victoria

Jeff Hoogendoorn

VICTORIA, B.C. — For many international students, living in North American culture holds both exhilaration and trepidation. There are new sights to behold, smells to be inhaled and customs to be deciphered.

A group of Russian students learning English as a second language in Victoria assert that Canadians smell somewhat different than Russians do. Richard, a Taiwanese student attending nearby Camosun College, ponders why children dress up on Halloween to knock on neighborhood doors and beg for candy.

But many students also feel a sense of strangeness when they first hear about Jesus Christ and the gospel. Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship (IVCF) is often the first contact international students have with the person of God and the Bible. In Canada, IVCF has its history in schools dating to the late 1920s under the helm of Dr. Howard Guinness. Today, IVCF is in almost every major Canadian university, the objective being to evangelize and to strengthen the spiritual life of students.

Low-key ministry

The International Student Ministry (ISM), a branch of IVCF, is designed specifically

for those studying from afar. Charlotte Hyde heads the ISM at the University of Victoria where some 800 international students are enrolled. IVCF has been in existence at the University of Victoria since 1963.

Hyde co-ordinates Bible studies, potluck dinners and camps. She builds on friendships, established with the students. She says that she strives first and foremost for a "relationship of trust in order to begin a dialogue in Christianity."

Dialogues do begin. Hyde runs free Saturday morning English-as-a-second language classes. While she does not utilize the Bible as teaching material, Hyde says she does "advertise it." This "advertising" manages to attract some 15 people to Bible studies on Thursday nights.

Summer camps attract large numbers. They are held at Pioneer Pacific on Thetis Island, a small, pastoral island between mainland B.C. and Vancouver Island.

Hyde is now planning the annual "International Christmas in the Country." This will be held at Camp Imadene on Vancouver Island. Indeed, this Christmas camp has been the highlight for many international students in the past, a time when the story of Jesus Christ has become more

real and tangible.

Activities at the camp will include those which are enjoyed by Canadian families across the country. These include cutting down a Christmas tree, making decorations, singing carols, playing games, hanging stockings and exchanging gifts. Hyde ensures that each participant has a stocking which can be brought back with him or her. Last year's snow fall ensured plenty of outdoor activities including the making of a snow man, no doubt a first for many.

Last year's Christmas camp attracted some 35 students whose nationalities ranged from Chinese to Mexican, Japanese, Korean, Belarus and Bulgarian. The outcome was "surprisingly successful" as Hyde puts it. "We acted out the Christmas story, which was quite interesting with that amount of people."

Like any serious issue, belief does not come without questions or riddles. And it is not enough for Hyde and others simply to present the gospel or the story of Christ's birth and Christmas. Last year's Christmas camp produced questions ranging from "Why do we have stockings?" to "I can be a good person without being a Christian."

Hyde is counting on approximately the same number of students as last year to attend the camp. Singles and families mean participants range from age two to 50.

Canadian content

Hyde is still searching for enough volunteers who will be willing to dedicate their Christmas to serving others. Says Hyde, "One leader family found it their spiritual high to be involved in the Christmas camp." Leader families (or singles) will enroll three or four students into their own families for the duration of the camp, thereby instilling a sense of love and belonging in the context of a Canadian family.

Hyde takes very seriously the issue of reaching out to international students. And she places this squarely in the lap of Canadian Christians. She says Christians have the "responsibility to enfold the international student who doesn't necessarily have a sense of belonging. This is important to show that Christianity is for all nations and not just for white people."

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Editorial

Compassion for Robert Latimer can lead astray

The second trial of Robert Latimer, like the first, has found the Saskatchewan farmer guilty of murder. The jury delivered the verdict with much reluctance, hoping that the sentence would be lenient. But the judge told them he had no choice but to impose a life sentence.

The trial brought up once again discussions around the concepts of compassion and mercy. Should Latimer, who claims to have killed his severely handicapped daughter, Tracy, out of love, receive the same kind of punishment as someone who kills out of hatred? Few people think of this quiet farmer as a danger to society. Nor is he considered an evil man by most. At worst, people think of him as a misguided parent who should not have killed his daughter just because she was suffering.

Whose pain?

One woman, who herself is severely handicapped, said in a radio interview that Latimer should serve the full sentence for murder: life. She said that Latimer killed his daughter not because of his daughter's pain but because of

his own. *He* could not stand to see his daughter suffering. He wanted to end his *own* pain.

This woman makes a good point. No one knew what Tracy was thinking or feeling. She could not tell anyone anything. Did *she* want to die or was that just an assumption on her parents' part? Or did that not even play a role in the fatal decision? Was Robert Latimer's act an act of compassion or a selfish act, or both? Not that compassion would excuse him, but the question is worth asking.

The pitfall of compassion

Compassion is such a muddled thing. When we experience compassion, we put ourselves in another person's place. And having done so, we *suffer along with* that person to the point where we want to avoid suffering and pain for that person, as if it had been our pain. In a sense, having compassion is a sophisticated way of protecting ourselves.

There's nothing wrong with that. It's a God-given ability we have through the powers of our imagination. Compassionate people, like the Good Samaritan, are good people to stumble across when you're in trouble. But when people exercise their powers to imagine and have compassion, they have to realize that they may end up not serving the cause of justice. From a "self" point of view, we generally desire a more pleasant outcome than may be warranted. That's especially true if the object of our compassion is connected to us by more than our imagination, either through blood or ethnicity.

Many a compassionate parent has stood in the way of a child's development towards responsibility. And how often don't we hear of people "lending" (what a joke) money to a relative who is feeding an expensive addiction and needs grocery money? Compassion can lead us into stupidity. When it concerns someone who has committed a serious crime, it can lead us into injustice. So we must be careful when we speak out of compassion.

There are differences

At the same time, a good case can be made for distinguishing between someone who kills out of suffering and one who kills out of anger or hatred. People like the Latimers have suffered a great deal. If because of this endless suffering they confuse their own pain with the pain of their daughter, or if in fact they are right about their daughter's pain, and end up taking her life in order to bring an end to this incredible pain, we should take that into account when seeking justice.

"There's a world of difference between what [Latimer] did and walking in and shooting the clerk at the grocery store in the head," said Dr. Peter Singer, director of the University of Toronto's Joint Centre for Bioethics. "A

criminal law that can't distinguish between those two things is seriously flawed."

Thus it may well be a good idea either to institute a charge of third degree murder with a lower minimum than is given for second degree murder, or to lower the minimum for second degree murder so that important distinctions can be made when a convicted person is sentenced.

It is and remains murder

It's interesting to note that the present lack of distinctions have led a Nova Scotia prosecutor to change a second degree murder charge to manslaughter in the case of Dr. Nancy Morrison. That, of course, is a third option. The danger of that, however, is that it makes it look as if what Robert Latimer did is not murder. A charge of manslaughter would place his deed on the same level as accidentally running over a pedestrian.

We have to maintain that mercy killing is murder. To call it less than that is very threatening to people with serious handicaps and illnesses. Besides, to consider what Latimer did the lesser of two evils, as did Latimer's lawyer, is to misrepresent the nature of evil. Suffering is not evil; killing someone *is*. We are told in Scripture that God can work all things, including our suffering, "for the good of those who love him" (Rom. 8:28).

Not only can God turn suffering into our profit, but in Hebrews 2:10 we read that God made Jesus "the author of their salvation perfect through suffering." If suffering can lead to perfection, we should never call suffering "evil," let alone the *greater* of two evils.

As far as allowing us to be led astray by false, self-centered compassion, we can avoid that by being in Christ. When Christ is in us, and his Word and Spirit dwell in us, than compassion means that we import the Christ-in-us into another person's situation. That way we will still be guided by love-truth as we exercise compassion in the search for justice. **BW**

Justice and mercy

Having compassion is a God-like quality. It means that we reflect God, whose capacity for mercy is infinite (endures forever).

In Micah 6:8 we read that well-known verse which invites us to a balancing act between the stern demands of justice and the gentle urgings of mercy: "And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with our God."

William Shakespeare eloquently defended this concept when he had Portia say in *The Merchant of Venice*:

*The quality of mercy is not strain'd,
It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven
Upon the place beneath: it is twice blest,
It blesseth him that gives, and him that takes....
It is an attribute to God himself;
And earthly power doth then show likest God's
When mercy seasons justice.*

BW

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Letters

Striking teachers did not rise to their high calling

In response to the news article "Christian public school teachers support strike" (CC, Nov. 7), strikes are an outmoded and ham-fisted negotiating tool to settle any labor dispute, certainly not befitting a noble profession such as teaching. By going on strike teachers have added to the long list of strikes in

Canada, one of the longest lists in Western industrial societies.

Is Bill 160 that odious in light of the economic realities of 1997? I can't help looking back 37 years at conditions in the teaching profession at that time. My starting salary was \$3,200 per year. At that time the term "prep time" had not yet

been invented. In fact, every morning and afternoon, including lunch hour, I had to supervise students on the playground besides carrying a regular teaching load.

To duplicate seat work for students I used the infamous "jelly pads," which could duplicate only 10 copies at a time. Most week nights I burned the midnight oil to prepare lessons and correct tests and assignments for the next day. I believe we had one professional development day per year.

the Soviets, who had put Sputnik in orbit around the earth, schools were being built at a dizzying pace in Ontario. The chickens have come home to roost and the Harris government has been saddled with the formidable task of downsizing and cutting spending in the province's bloated Department of Education.

Instead of helping the government, the teachers have become an obstacle to responsible reform by resorting to a strike.

We must see teaching as a high calling. I am personally thankful for having been allowed to minister to students for over 30 years in different places in Ontario in public, Catholic and Christian schools. Instead of striking against the Harris government, let's pray that our government officials may make the right decisions for the residents of Ontario and Canada.

Henry Lammers
St. Catharines, Ont.

Speaking: 'Thus says the Lord'

I read your editorial of Oct. 24 with increasing sadness for the simple reason that I experience viewpoints as outlined in your editorial as a denying of the explicit command of God.

Let's face it, a homosexual relationship is clearly and explicitly forbidden by God. The Bible puts homosexuals on the same level as thieves, drunkards and slanderers. Let's keep that in mind first of all when we write about "rights."

Furthermore, these rights to benefits such as pensions, healthcare and taxes are directed toward the family, to nurture and help it along. There are also benefits and rights for single individuals, but families have their own rights and entitlements in the law. These rights do not apply to homosexual couples because they are not, and never will be, families according to the command of the Lord. Our advice to the secular world must always be in line with the command of the Lord.

CPJ has a nice formulation for my stand; they call it "being confused in the various areas of responsibility." Nonsense. Our only responsibility is to be a sounding board for the Word of God, not

matter the going public opinion.

CPJ sees that there is a problem; that's why they use different terminology, suggesting "registered domestic partnership." They would include gay or straight, relatives and even friends. All this to get homosexuals accommodated. Who would pay for all this nonsense? Do you really believe that these so-called "registered domestic partnerships" would provide stability and protection?

I think that homosexual and common-law relationships are one of the causes of the instability which we see all around us. I do not confuse the arm of the law with church discipline, but our speaking to the secular world must always be, "Thus says the Lord." Then it is up to others. Where is our slogan: "Every inch to be claimed for Jesus Christ?" Is that what your editorial did?

Your editorial ends with the statement, "Let the sun of legal equality shine on us all." I end with the hope that we use the Word of God as a guide in all our actions and proclamations.

Bill Van Oene
Welland, Ont.

It's a matter of expressing God's truth

This is in response to your editorial "Let the light shine on all committed couples?" (CC, Oct. 24).

As Christians, shouldn't we be committed to expressing the scriptural and spiritual truths of the importance and sacredness of marriage and the family in God's creation? When the law no longer respects the traditional privileges of marriage and grants these same privileges to unmarried and/or homosexual couples, what is going to happen to our society?

I agree with Charles Colson when he says that the law is a moral teacher, capable of influencing people's attitudes and choices. As Christians, are we to stand by and let our government defy God's laws for human behavior all in the name of "legal equality?" I think not!

In your editorial you stated: "For the same reason that secularists should not impose their values on Christian schools, Christians should not impose their values on a secular society that more and more acknowledges homosexual relationships." May I remind you that this is not about imposing our values but it is simply a matter of expressing God's TRUTH about his created order. Our values are not based on private convictions but on

objective truths from God's Word. God's truth is true for everyone whether they choose to apply it to their lives or not.

I agree with Michael Horner when he wrote in "The Truth Behind Tolerance" that truth should take priority over tolerance. In other words, Christians should not be afraid to express the truth in this secular society.

Does God call us to compromise? Of course not! In a pluralistic society Christians have every right to uphold the truth of God's moral framework. Let's not be deceived into falling for the concept of relativism, that all truths are equal. The Christian faith requires us to see the world through His eyes. Every decision should reflect what we believe and what we value in Christ. And like Abraham Kuyper, we shouldn't just talk about Christianity as being a worldview, but we should act on it!

As Christians, how can we possibly endorse our government's plans to recognize homosexual couples by giving them the same status and benefits under the law as heterosexual married couples? In my view that is simply preposterous.

Ian Ravensbergen
Richmond, B.C.

A legacy of overspending

I'm not saying that those were the good old days, but I can't escape the feeling that present-day teachers, especially those teaching in public and Catholic schools, with their excellent salaries and wage and health benefits, have become somewhat spoiled.

Ironically, during the '60s, when another Tory government was in power and we were supposed to catch up with

No CRC decision on sterilization

John Dinan's "Is genetic engineering the new eugenics?" (CC, Sept. 19) tied in quite nicely with what I had been reading this summer in different books and papers.

The *Edmonton Journal* referred several times to sterilization/eugenics in connection with the Alberta Sexual Sterilization Act of 1928 and a court case by a woman sterilized under the Act.

Those interested in Dinan's article may also want to read Anthony Flew's article "From Is to Ought" in *The Sociobiology Debate*, edited by Arthur L. Caplan; and several articles in *A History of Women*, Vol. 5: *Toward a Cultural Identity in the Twentieth Century*, edited by Francoise Thebaud, notably Victoria de Grazia's "How Mussolini Ruled Italian Women," and Gisela Bock's "Nazi Gender Policies and Women's History."

Much of 20th century Western society stands condemned, and looking in an index of the Christian Reformed Church's synodical decisions, I could not find anything about eugenics. Was the CRC silent? Was the church as a whole silent? Was the church in its silence complicit?

Frightening thought.

Bert den Boggende
Lacombe, Alta.

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Feature

Our ability to forgive prepares us for a peaceful Christmas

*Then cleansed be every life from sin:
make straight the way for God within,
and let us all our hearts prepare
for Christ to come and enter there*

(v.2, "On Jordan's Bank the Baptist's Cry,"
Charles Coffin, 1736).

Maria Stam

Advent invites us to become people of peace. But peace can exist only if we live in harmony with each other. There is no better time than the Christmas season to come to grips with feelings of resentment, and to forgive those who have injured us. We may all have the best intentions, but sometimes other people can make it difficult or even impossible for us to be forgiving and loving.

That was what my friend Jackie (not her real name) experienced when she unexpectedly received a letter with false accusations from her daughter-in-law. Among others, Donna (not her real name) blamed her marriage problems on her mother-in-law because she had not raised her son properly.

Not only was Jackie deeply offended, she also heard for the first time that her son's marriage was in trouble. Since the letter arrived shortly before the beginning of Advent, the painful experience dampened Jackie's plans for a happy Christmas celebration with the family.

After her first reaction, she

did not want to believe that Donna was serious with her accusations and tried to ignore the letter. But her efforts did not work. There was still some discomfort in the back of her mind which prevented her from living in peace. When she realized that under this circumstance she could not go on in the usual way to prepare for Christmas, she finally decided to take steps in order to clarify the situation.

Nearly two weeks had passed since the arrival of the letter. The lapse of time made it possible for her to think more calmly about it and to answer carefully and objectively without complaints or counter-accusations. However, her hope to restore the relationship was dashed when another, even more offensive, letter arrived.

This time she replied by mailing an invitation to her daughter-in-law to meet with her over lunch for a talk. The invitation was ignored. Instead Jackie received a short note of apology which left her confused. No matter how much Donna might have regretted her accusations, the harm was done. Jackie



"Donna blamed her marriage problems on her mother-in-law because she had not raised her son properly."

struggled with herself and prayed for guidance in how to handle this situation.

We can live in peace only if we try to resolve our grudges against others. Letting go of anger about unjust treatment is not always easy. We wish the pain would go away by itself, but it seldom disappears because we tend to cover it up rather than to deal with it. To start the healing process, we have to ask ourselves if we have done something to make it possible for others to hurt us. If the answer is

yes we should try to forgive ourselves first.

For most of us it takes time and effort to forgive. To overcome our wounded pride requires some self-denial and humility. True forgiveness has to come from the bottom of one's heart. Just to say, "I forgive you," is not enough. Pretending and covering up true feelings does not lead to real healing. It is better to let the person who has done us wrong know that we have been hurt, and to point out those things which have given

us the most pain. As long as we have not really forgiven, reconciliation is only a superficial gesture. The next step after forgiveness is to try to forget, which is often harder to achieve and depends much on the value we place on our relationship with the wrongdoer.

Even offenders sometimes have difficulty in taking the outstretched, forgiving hand, for they, too, have a special token of superiority. After we asked somebody for forgiveness, have we not all sometimes experienced doubts about whether he or she has really forgiven us?

As a sign of goodwill we could present the person who has hurt us with a special token or gift at Christmas or at another opportunity to show that our pardon is genuine.

Forgiveness is the pre-requisite of love — without it we cannot love. Our Christian faith is based upon love and Christ teaches us "to love one another just as I have loved you" (John 13:34), and in Luke 6:27:31 he challenges us even more when he commands us to love our enemies.

For Jackie it was the most difficult Advent she had ever experienced. But she also recognized that it was a challenging time as well, because she was forced to choose between the breakup of the relationship with her family or restoring it through the act of forgiveness. After she was able to pray for Donna and to ask God for strength to overcome feelings of hurt and to love her in spite of all, she was able to accept the apology. As peace entered her heart again, she was able to enjoy preparing for the celebration of Christmas.

Taking to mind the proverb: "To err is human, to forgive divine," can encourage us to reach out to the person we feel has wronged us. In recognition that we all are in need of forgiveness and that Advent is the time when we contemplate on Christ's coming into the world to redeem us from our sins, it may be possible for us to master the last hurdle on our way to reconciliation and to love.

*Since the writing of this story,
"Jackie's" son and daughter-in-law
have separated.*

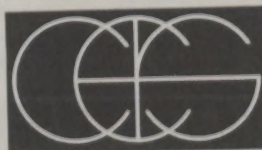
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Arts/Media

Video review

Margaret's Museum a quiet monument to miners

Marian Van Til

Margaret's Museum

Stars Helena Bonham Carter, Kate Nelligan, Clive Russell, Ken Welsh. Written by Gerald Wexler and Mort Ransen; based on the short story by Sheldon Currie. Directed by Mort Ransen.

Margaret's Museum is a kind of quiet, Canadian-produced movie that sneaks up on you before you realize it, in the end packing an emotional wallop and making a razor-sharp point without being the least bit preachy.

It is set on the Nova Scotia coast in the 1940s among the Scots and Irish who made a gritty, if adequate, living in the area's deadly coal mines.

Margaret MacNeil (Helena Bonham Carter), though barely out of her teens, has already had a life which has not afforded her the luxury of care-free teenaged days seen through romantic, rose-colored glasses: she has



Helena Bonham Carter as Margaret MacNeil

lost her father and a 16-year-old brother to the mine; and in another way, her mother too. Mrs. MacNeil, though still young herself, has become cynical and hard, encased in emotional armor which she hopes will protect any chinks of vulnerability she has left.

Margaret has one more brother, Jimmy (Craig Olejnik), whom they're trying to prevent

from working in the mines; a compassionate uncle, Angus (Ken Welsh), a miner who buys them groceries every week; and a sickly paternal grandfather whom they nurse in their home — his lungs have been blackened and shriveled from the years of inhaling coal dust.

Gaelic heritage

When an ex-miner named Neil Currie (Clive Russell) comes to town and strikes up a friendship with Margaret, Mrs. MacNeil can hardly stand her daughter's happiness, and warns her that loving any man will only cause sorrow.

She reacts particularly against Neil, one suspects, because he's a little too like her late husband: a proud Scotsman who drinks slightly more than he should, who steadfastly goes his own way, and who insists on upholding the old traditions, which include playing the pipes and speaking Gaelic (their and the Irish mother-tongue), and passing it and the ethnic traditions on to the next generation. (In Britain speaking Gaelic had for some years been banned).

The potential danger of the mine hangs over the town like a shroud (but not over the film). With every new day the citizens know that it may be some miner's last; the women may hear the dreaded siren and instinctively drop what they're doing to spill out into the mine road to see if the dead are ones of theirs.

The film, however, manages to avoid being gloomy. Neil not only rekindles a Gaelic pride in a number of the village men, to the delight of Margaret's grandfather, but sparks a happiness in Margaret she never knew she'd feel.

Can that happiness survive Neil's return to the mine, and Jimmy's entrance into the mines? In the end, Margaret teaches us in a bizarre, blackly humorous and totally unexpected way what a toll this mine — any mine — takes on its community (that's where the title comes in.)

Visual storytelling

Margaret's Museum is beautifully filmed and acted; it unwinds as a kind of seamless,

visual version of a tale that might have been told by a long line of adept Gaelic storytellers.

Helena Bonham Carter — a veteran of numerous costume dramas, including the acclaimed *Howard's End* and *Room With a View* — and Kate Nelligan are the stars who provided name recognition for the film during its theatre run early last year.

Convincing actors

Bonham Carter adopts a thoroughly convincing Nova Scotian accent and evinces the strength of Margaret's character through body language and the minutest of facial expressions. Clive Russell as Neil was a find; not only is he a good actor, but a bag-piper and dancer as well (he's not faking it).

This film is not for young children but is fine for a winter night at home with older children, or would work well as a thoughtful yet entertaining discussion-starter for youth groups or high school classes (it does contain a few instances of a particular vulgar word, which usage in the story is not meant to be vulgar).

Ministry resources available for Super Bowl XXXII

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. (SOA) — Sports Outreach America (SOA), a non-profit consortium of para-church organizations, denominations, and individuals united for outreach through sports, has developed a wide range of ministry materials for churches and individuals to host an evangelistic outreach party during the National Football League's Super Bowl, Jan. 25, 1998.

Reaching one million

Super Bowl materials have reached over one million people over the past seven years, featuring the testimonies of top Christian NFL players such as Reggie White, Mike Singletary and former coaching great Tom Landry. During that time, over 25,000 people have made decisions for Christ and hundreds of thousands of lives have been touched as a result of God working through the program, says SOA.

"We have seen tremendous fruit from this program. A num-

ber of party host organizers have said that many people won't come to a church service on Sunday night but they come to watch the Super Bowl. There the seed is planted," a host organizer in Michigan recounts.

The 1998 Super Bowl Outreach kit contains five special items: a 12-minute video featuring Coach Mike Holmgren, Eugene Robinson, and Don Beebe of the Champion Green Bay Packers; 10 Super Bowl edition *Sports Spectrum* magazines; 10 "More Than Winning"

booklets; one Super Bowl Bash poster; one Training Manual to help persons wanting to host a Super Bowl party.

Nearly 100 organizations are involved in SOA. The partners who are providing various elements of the 1998 kit include Athletes in Action, Fellowship of Christian Athletes, International Bible Society, and Sports Spectrum.

For more information call 1-800-BOWL-PARTY.

Gospel musicians react to 'Ellen'

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (EP) — Angie and Debbie Winans, members of the first family of gospel music, say their new album, *Bold*, includes a song written after watching the "coming out" episode of ABC's sitcom "Ellen." In that episode the show's main character revealed she is a lesbian.

The Winans' song, "Not

Natural," takes a stand against not only homosexuality, but fornication and violence. Angie Winans says the song was inspired by "a holy anger."

She responds to critics of the song by noting that Janet Jackson's new album features a song about sex with a woman. Winans asks, "Why can she say that and we can't say anything?"

Lions eat Christians, 20th century style

ROME (EP) — In one of the unlikeliest tourist spectacles of recent years, visitors to Rome will soon be able to see lions eating Christians as they did the days of the ancient Roman empire. A new state-of-the-art special effects theme park, the \$258 million "Roma Vetus" project, will have a 180,000-seat amphitheater with chariot races, gladiator battles, and Christians being eaten by wild animals.

No actual Christians are scheduled to be eaten, park producers assure — the effects will be created by Oscar winner Carlo Rambaldi, who worked with Steven Spielberg on E.T., the extra-terrestrial.

van der Woerd
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Church

U.S. House subcommittee supports religious freedom

WASHINGTON, D.C. (EP) — A U.S. House of Representatives subcommittee approved on Oct. 28 language for a constitutional amendment that would permit prayer in public schools and the exercise of religious freedoms on public property. The House Judiciary Subcommittee on the Constitution voted 8-4 along party lines in approving the measure.

Republicans said the change was needed to overturn court interpretations that have restricted the First Amendment right to religious freedom in ways the nation's founders never intended. They noted that courts have forbidden the display of the Ten Commandments in a courtroom, required public parks

to remove religious symbols, and forced cities to remove crosses from their official seals.

"What this recognizes is that religious groups have as much right to access public property as non-religious groups," said House Judiciary Committee Chairman Henry Hyde (R-Ill.).

Democrats insisted that voluntary prayer is already permitted in public schools and warned that courts might interpret the proposed amendment in a way that would make things worse than they are now. They also said the amendment could lead to public funding of religious schools, which they oppose.

Rep. Jerrold Nadler (D-N.Y.) said the examples given by the

amendment's backers weren't problems of law "but of misinformation" by government officials who misunderstood the law.

But Rep. Charles Canady (R-Fla.), who chairs the subcommittee, said that it was "a problem of people whose rights aren't being respected." He added, "We're trying to put in place something that will make it less likely that people's rights will be infringed."

The proposed amendment reads: *To secure the people's right to acknowledge God according to the dictates of conscience: Neither the United States nor any state shall establish any official religion, but the people's right to pray and to*

recognize their religious beliefs, heritage, or traditions on public property, including schools, shall not be infringed. Neither the United States nor any state shall require any person to join in prayer or other religious activity, prescribe school prayers, discriminate against religion, or

deny equal access to a benefit on account of religion.

There is no companion bill in the Senate. A constitutional amendment must be approved by a two-thirds majority of the House and Senate, then be ratified by the legislatures of three-fourths of the states.

Christians urged to pray on AIDS Day

IRVINE, Calif. (EP) — Christians around the world are being asked to observe World AIDS Day, Dec. 1, by joining in prayer for those affected by AIDS, especially children.

"He Intends Victory," a Christian AIDS ministry based in Irvine, California, has also asked believers to unite in caring for those afflicted by AIDS.

"We encourage Christians around the world to pray for those affected by AIDS and also to share how we, as believers, can offer the only real hope available to bring peace and comfort through Jesus Christ," said Rev. Bruce Sonnenberg, president of He Intends Victory. "World AIDS Day is also a great opportunity for pastors to mention the topic in sermons and encourage people to follow the example of Jesus and reach out in love."

World AIDS Day, observed annually on Dec. 1, celebrates the lives of people with the disease and their families, while remembering those who have died. This year's theme is "Children Living In A World With AIDS." The observance began in 1988 and has been a day bringing messages of compassion, hope, solidarity and understanding about AIDS to every country in the world.

Attitude breakthrough

Rev. Herb Hall, a Christian living with AIDS and vice president of He Intends Victory, said he has been encouraged by the fact that there is gradually much more Christian involvement in helping those with HIV

and AIDS.

"The word is finally getting out and the churches and the Christians are finally opening up," he said. "Many were not there at the start of the epidemic but now they are now showing the love and compassion of Jesus Christ. This, combined with the new medical breakthroughs, has shown that there is now also a breakthrough in people's attitudes."

Hall added, "The need is for the church to move to the forefront of this epidemic and take over from what secular society has already done. We

need to reach out with the love and compassion and minister in the name of the Lord. The children of the world that are infected and affected by HIV and AIDS particularly need our care, love and help."

He Intends Victory, which now has support groups across the United States, supplies free information packs on how to minister to people with HIV and AIDS. To request information, write to: He Intends Victory, P.O. Box 18499, Irvine, CA 92623, or call toll-free: (800) HIV-HOPE.

End of the world not 'usshered' in

ST. PAUL, Minn. (EP) — In case you missed it, the world came to an end on Oct. 23. At least, it would have if 17th century Irish scholar Archbishop James Ussher had things figured correctly.

Ussher used genealogies and historical references in Scripture to calculate that God created the world on Oct. 23, 4004 B.C. Ussher then reasoned that since God created the world in six days, and since the Bible says that a day is as a thousand years to God, then God must have meant for his creation to last for only 6,000 years.

Allow for the four-year error in the Julian calendar's calculation of the time of Christ, and another calendar error relating to the year zero, and it spells cataclysm in 1997. Ussher's calculation of the age of creation has become near-gospel in some conservative Christian circles, and Ussher's contemporary, Dr. John Lightfoot of Cambridge University, calculated further that creation began at 9 a.m. London time.

The fact that you're reading this, of course, suggests that, like many other date-setters, Ussher was wrong. Ussher seems to have forgotten Christ's words that "no one knows the day or the hour" when he will return.

Nigerian mission plants 300 churches

FORT ERIE, Ont. (CANS) — An indigenous faith mission in Nigeria has planted nearly 300 churches in the last four years, and is well on its way to reaching its goal of starting 500 new churches by the year 2000.

The executive committee of Gospel Faith Mission determined on Jan. 1, 1994, to start 500 churches by the end of the year 2000, and called its program "Operation Open Door."

Reaching the goal required at least 71 churches to be started each year for seven years. The growth rate for the last four years has averaged 75 new churches per year, although many do not as yet have permanent buildings.

Nigeria, with 100 million people who speak over 400 languages, is the most populated nation in Africa. About 40 per cent of the population is classified as Christian, though northern states are dominated by a strong Muslim majority. However, most people, except born-again believers, follow animistic beliefs and practices.

During a visit to Christian Aid headquarters in Ontario, Elijah Abina, general overseer of the Ibadan-based mission, said that the typical new congregation is between 36 and 50 believers, though some churches in more populated areas have grown more rapidly.

Clear testimony

Abina said that GFM leadership challenged each district and zone of Nigeria to start a certain number of new churches. Pastors, evangelists and lay workers from the churches in each district evangelized their neighboring areas. In addition, an evangelistic team was sent from the Ibadan headquarters to various places.

"Our evangelists are trained to be church planters," Abina said. "They will stay on site for two or three months and then turn the newly gathered nucleus

of believers over to a missionary."

Cross-cultural missionaries are trained at a School of World Missions in Ibadan. Those entering must have at least a sixth-grade education, though some have graduated from GFM's Gospel Bible College in Okitipupa. Candidates must also have a clear testimony and the gifts and calling of God are significant factors. The school offers one-year missionary training which alternates between classroom and practical work on the field. Most of the trainees are sent to northern Nigeria for field work.

"The students pay no fees for their missionary training," Abina said. "We provide meals and accommodation while they are in the classroom, and try to find a church to sponsor them while they are on fieldwork assignments. Currently we enroll only 12 trainees per year and can provide them only two meals per day. We should take in 25 students per year and need about \$1 per day per student to feed each one adequately."

Gospel Faith Mission was started by Yoruba-speaking R.A. George in the living room of his house in 1956. Though not highly educated, George emphasized the teaching of the Word of God in contrast to the emotionalism of some African sects. The movement today number 564 churches and 70,000 believers in Nigeria, with additional churches planted in 47 African nations. The ministry also has planted congregations among Nigerian expatriates in England and the USA.

Abina said that one of the biggest challenges facing the work is the urgent need for vehicles.

"Right now we have only one van for our School of World Missions operation. We need several more vans for evangelistic outreach, and four motorized boats for mission fields in delta areas," Abina said.

Church

Graham California crusade elicits best youth response ever

OAKLAND, Calif. (EP) — Evangelist Billy Graham wrapped up his three-city Bay Area crusade at the Oakland-Alameda County Coliseum October 25 and 26, with the highest percentage response among young people of his 50-year ministry.



Billy Graham

The outreach was designed to help local churches prepare for the next century by reaching out to different ethnic groups and to the "children of the millennium."

"I hope when this crusade is over, we won't let the spirit that has developed die, and that we will see a great spiritual awakening," Graham said at the concluding meeting. "A number of clergy have said this is the first time many pastors have gotten to know each other. Wouldn't it be great if we could forget our denominations and just be people of God?"

More than 1,400 churches representing 100 denominations came together from around the Bay Area for the first time because of the crusade. They transformed the Oakland Raiders' playing field into a "Super Bowl" of church evangelism, as enthusiastic crowds of adults, teens and children huddled together in prayer, shouted familiar praise songs and made commitments to follow Christ.

Geared to the next generation

An average of 41,200 people attended each Oakland meeting, and 10,200 came forward to make a commitment to Christ. Of particular significance was the number of young people, aged 12-18, who made up more than 50 per cent of the attendance at four youth events, and accounted for over 60 per cent

of the total commitments.

Crusade director Rick Marshall credited publicity and promotion geared especially for young people. "This crusade was prayed and paid for by the adults of this community, but it reached out to the youth of the next generation, who will go into a future world their parents will never see," he said.

The advertising campaign for the crusade poked fun at the Bay Area's hedonistic image with one ad that said: "50,000 sinners in one place, and you don't think you'll have fun."

Another showed a bungee-jumping Californian falling, with the slogan: "Why do many Californians wait until the last minute to talk to God?"

'Mostly I'm just old'

Graham's health continues to fail, but that has not stopped him from preaching the gospel. The evangelist postponed several non-crusade media events during the crusade to conserve his strength for the crusades themselves.

Due to a flare-up of a back injury, doctors at Mayo Clinic ordered Graham to bed during a break between cities for rest, therapy and medication. "Mostly, I'm just old," Graham told the *San Francisco Chronicle*.

The crusade's impact extended beyond the arenas to benefit local kids. Graham joined his son Franklin, president of the international relief organization Samaritan's Purse, in visiting Oakland's Samaritan Neighborhood Center, which is supported by both of their organizations. In addition, the crusade collected and will distribute nearly 1,000 backpacks filled with food, clothing and school supplies to more underprivileged area school children.

The Bay Area crusade was the first time Graham has held a single crusade in three cities, with outreaches at San Jose Arena Sept. 26-28, San Francisco's Cow Palace Oct. 9-11, and Oakland-Alameda County Coliseum, Oct. 25 and 26. Graham said the city which surprised him the most was San Francisco, where the stadium was packed nightly with crowds averaging nearly 5,000 beyond capacity each night.

The San Francisco leg of the crusade also provided the most controversy, as homosexuals in

Sincere wisdom

"But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere" (James 3:17)



● Wayne Brouwer
Andrew Kuyvenhoven
Laura Smit
Al Wolters

At the time of the French Revolution a group of university students observed the French Assembly in its attempt to create a new code of law for the unfolding age of the Republic. They were appalled at the long-winded speeches and pompous debates that seemed more geared to personal pride than to the public good.

When they voiced their harsh opinions to the honorable Gabriel Mirabeau, champion of the Revolution, he gave them some interesting advice. "Laws," he said, "are like sausages. You should never watch them being made!"

Purity

Mirabeau was a man of other insights as well. When he first heard a passionate public speech by fellow Revolutionary statesman Robespierre, he said, "This man will go far; he believes what he says!"

That truth wasn't lost on the crowds. They used to say of Robespierre that he was an "incorruptible" man. He was the same man on the street as he was in the privacy of drawing rooms where the devious games of politics were played. Whether Robespierre had the best view of society for the good of the people in France's changing times will always be debated. But his heart was never questioned.

To believe what you say, and to say what you believe is the soul of sincerity. The Bible calls it purity of heart, in which motives are unmixed. What you see is what you get. Religiously, there is great value in sincerity. "Blessed are the pure in heart," said Jesus, "for they will see God!"

Patience

Purity of heart coupled with patience is a strong virtue. When Groen van Prinsterer waged his lonely battle in the Dutch House of Commons for a biblically shaped world of justice, it was his sincerity of faith that carried him along. In fact, when Abraham Kuyper met van Prinsterer on the evening of May 18, 1869, in one of the rooms of the great church in

Chapter & Verse

Utrecht, the strength of van Prinsterer's convictions, coupled with his patient plodding toward the utopia of the vision of God's great Kingdom, so inspired Kuyper that it became the driving force of his own political career.

More than 25 years later Kuyper said that when he met van Prinsterer that night he became a "spiritual son" to the man. No one who held his convictions with such patience, said Kuyper, could be far from the truth.

Passion

Patient purity of faith is a powerful inner strength. Combine it with passion, and it becomes a quality of leadership. Canada's Joe Clark always displayed purity of convictions and patience in politics, yet he never exuded the passion that evoked national allegiance. The same was true of Jimmy Carter in the U.S. No one doubted the sincerity of his faith, or the tenacity of his willingness to carry through on policy. But passion wasn't Carter's forte.

Passion is a slippery thing. If it rises without inner substance, it can destroy others with violence, or else carry them along in the hollowiness of mere entertainment. An American once complained to Marshal Ferdinand Foch, commander of the French military at the start of World War I, that the politeness of French conversations seemed insincere. "There is nothing in it," he said, "but wind!"

Foch replied, "There is nothing but wind in a tire, but it makes riding in a car very smooth and pleasant!"

Maybe so. But there are times in life when we need more than wind, more than T.S. Eliot's "hollow men" who are distracted by distractions. Passion that flows from purity of heart in a life given to patient plodding toward the Kingdom of God has great power.

Follow the person with that kind of wisdom!

Wayne Brouwer is senior pastor at Harderwyk Christian Reformed Church in Holland, Mich.

the community took issue with Graham's belief that homosexual activity is a sin.

All sinners welcome

In response to a question posed at a press conference, Graham said, "I'm going to quote the Bible now. It is wrong. It's sin. But there are other sins. Why do we jump on that sin as though it's the greatest sin? The Bible says the greatest sin is idolatry, worshipping things other than the true and living God."

Graham welcomed all to the crusade, saying, "Whatever your racial background or your sexual orientation — we welcome all of you tonight in the name of Christ. It does us good to be together from all denominations and backgrounds, because we all have the same God."

Graham called his San Francisco audience to a ministry of compassion. "Jesus never met a human need that He didn't supply," Graham said. "He made the blind to see, the mute to speak, and the deaf to hear. He touched

and cleansed the lepers. He didn't just say, 'Be clean.' He touched them. He got involved with them. Compassion means not only that you sit and think how terrible that is, it means you get in step and try to help them.

"There's hunger, homelessness, injustice, and racial prejudice that causes people to feel hurt, and as Christians, we need to get in and do something about it and set an example as to how a Christian ought to be in any community," he concluded.

Feature

Coming to the banquet

Willy Nywening

The sign said: "All are welcome! Come and meet the Savior."

Neighbors often listened to the marvellous, joyful singing that poured from the open windows on Sunday mornings. They speculated about whether there was a special choir in church; or whether the occupants of that ordinary church building were actually that happy.

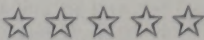
And so some came. The sign said they were welcome.

A young mother wanted to take her three young children to church. Janet was dressed in her Sunday best: a worn, rather crumpled pair of jeans and a pretty frilled blouse recently purchased at the thrift store. The children looked decent: their faces were clean and their hair was combed away from the scrubbed faces. Their clothes were threadbare from many washings.

Janet surveyed her charges. She wished she could do better by them. She hoped and prayed to an unknown God that she was giving them everything they needed. What she had was enough for her, but she wanted more for them; wanted them to know that being poor is not shameful; wanted them to belong to something bigger and better than she could give.

She had been a foster child. She had lived in a home in which she had gone to church. Those memories were precious and clear. In her heart, she cherished the love that she had known there. She summoned those remembrances to find the courage to go to the church.

The children were given their instructions and went with their mother. She was timid; they were undaunted.



The little family was greeted warmly at the door and told about the nursery that was available downstairs. So down they went. But Jimmy didn't want to be left there all by himself, and Laura wouldn't stay with him, especially after she heard Susie whisper to her mom, "Mom,



they smell!" And Jason and Laura were too old for the nursery anyway. Oh well, Janet decided that she'd rather know where they were anyway, so back upstairs they went. Unfortunately, Jimmy was still crying rather loudly.

This time the greeters didn't really know what to say. But the usher took over and seated them

As she stopped to look at the shattered welcome sign on the ground, she wondered why her mother had cried after church.

right next to Mr. and Mrs. Lehan. Such a nice old couple, the usher thought. They'd be okay there.

Once the kids were quiet, Janet smiled and looked around. She saw lots of people. Such a nice building, so clean; almost sterile, she thought. Mr. Lehan met her stare and tried to smile. Jimmy did have a strange odor. Then the service started and Janet thought that the singing was even more wonderful inside

than it was outside. The memories flooded back vividly. She was glad she had come. Now if only the kids would sit still long enough.



Things went fairly well until the prayer. Then Jason ripped a page in the hymnal. Mrs. Smith turned around, shook her finger at him and took it away. That was enough for him. He wrapped his mother's skirt around himself and hid. Oh well, thought Janet, at least he'll be quiet for the rest of the service.

"Does anyone have any special prayer requests?" asked the minister. All was quiet. And he asked again, "Are there any prayer requests, any special needs that we could take to the Lord, this morning?"

Mr. Jones asked that the collection for the needy would be bountiful. Mrs. Fisser said that if it were the Lord's will, she'd like her brother to be healed quickly.

"Anyone else have a request? Don't be shy. The Lord wants us to ask him for things," the minister reiterated boldly.

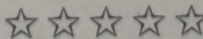
Janet was moved. Was it possible? Could this God really help her too? Would he listen to her? And then, before she knew it Laura was standing on the bench.

"Could you ask for a new bike for me, cause my old one went in the garbage, and mom says she doesn't have any money to buy me another one," she stated emphatically.

The gasp from Mr. and Mrs. Lehan was audible. The snickering from others was even louder. Janet wanted to crawl under the seat. The minister said kindly, "I guess that most of the boys and girls here would like new bikes, but we, you know, we don't usually ask God for bikes."

"I didn't know that, mom," whispered Laura loudly to Janet.

"Shhhhh, Laura, this is a church, be quiet!" Janet responded. And Laura listened.



Jimmy dirtied his diaper and then fell asleep. Mrs. Lehan took out her lace hankie with the nice cologne and held it to her nose. She smiled at Janet. Janet smiled back.

And pretty soon it was over.

Janet was quite surprised when the minister invited everyone for coffee and juice in the fellowship hall. But Jason was sullen and Laura didn't look very happy and Jimmy still smelled and was getting restless, so she thought she'd better take them home before something major went wrong.

No one really tried to get them to stay. The minister did greet her and say that it was nice she had come and he hoped she would come again. Janet doubted it, but she just said, "Maybe, sometime."

Janet thought about going back. She talked to Laura and Jason about going to Sunday school. They didn't say much, except that the people were mean and they didn't ever want to go there again. Janet tried to tell them that people have to be good in church, but it didn't help. She still wanted to listen to the singing from the church she had been in. She tried a few times to figure out why it never sounded quite the same, but eventually it didn't matter. It really was a lot easier to watch the church on TV.



The next Sunday in church, the minister thanked God for the visitors in church (he wasn't sure if there were any, but he knew that last week he forgot); for Mrs. Fisser's brother, who was getting better slowly; and for people to be more generous in giving to the needy. In the church bulletin, the chair of the building committee asked if anyone knew what had happened to the new welcome sign outside the church; the glass had been badly smashed.

During the service, Laura rode by defiantly on her new bicycle. Her mother had won it in a draw at the grocery store. She was still puzzled by what the minister had said about asking God for a bike. As she stopped to look at the shattered welcome sign on the ground, she wondered why her mother had cried after church. Adults were pretty strange. Maybe this week she'd pray for a new dad so her mom wouldn't be so sad.

She listened to the singing. She thought it was a strange song: "I cannot come to the banquet, don't bother me now, I have married a wife, I have bought me a cow...."

She rode off smiling, thinking how funny it would be to see a cow in church.

Willy Nywening is a high school English teacher who lives in Strathroy, Ont.

Feature

In Russia, poets are prophets

by
Wendy Elgersma Helleman

On Monday, October 27, I was invited to a very special event here in Moscow. It was an evening devoted to a double reading of poetry, with Olga Sedakova presenting a number of her poems, and Hamutal Bar-Yosef reading the translations she had made of these poems into modern Hebrew.

It all began last September on our flight back to Moscow. When we got to our seats for the last leg of that journey we found that, unlike some passengers who give a clear indication that they have no interest in conversation, the person sitting next to us was quite willing to talk. We had had a rather short night, with little sleep, but an excellent cup of coffee in the Paris airport

ber, there was some room in her schedule.

Labor of love

Bar-Yosef's parents immigrated to Israel after the First World War. She herself grew up in a kibbutz speaking Hebrew. She did not learn the Ukrainian and Russian languages of her family background until much later. As soon as the Iron Curtain came down and it became possible, she travelled to Kiev and there, some six years ago, found a publication of Sedakova's poetry. This was the kind of thing she had been looking for; in her own words, she immediately "fell in love with it," as one poetess greatly appreciating the work of another. She decided to try translating it into Hebrew.

For Bar-Yosef this was a labor of love, yet in so doing she was also consciously perpetuating a tradition from the early part of this century when Russian Symbolist poets, following on the work of Solov'ev, made a significant impact on the earliest Hebrew poets of the newly formed state of Israel. Solov'ev himself was a poet and philosopher-scholar of wide interests, with varied religious connections, as much at home in the work of Catholic writers as in Jewish lore, particularly the Kabbala.

Fortuitous meeting

Bar-Yosef's involvement in the Judaica project in Moscow proved to be of special value for her translations, for here she not only met Olga Sedakova, but also met Anna, the daughter of Jews who had converted to the Russian Orthodox faith. They had left for Israel as soon as they could immigrate, only to discover that being a Christian

Jew in Israel was even more difficult than being a Christian Jew in Russia. Anna speaks Hebrew fluently, since she received a substantial part of her education in Israel, and so could help Hamutal Bar-Yosef understand the Russian poetry more exactly and find the necessary Hebrew equivalents.

This work has resulted in a lovely, small dual-language publication, printed this year in Jerusalem in both Russian and Hebrew. Its front cover (or rather the back, since this is a Hebrew publication) portrays a traditional *babushka*, a Russian grandmother. The poems chosen by Hamutal are from a cycle in which Olga pays tribute to her grandmother, a well-educated woman, who, under the most difficult conditions, managed to keep alive a Christian literary circle.

The evening itself was a memorable event. Although held at the Humanities University, the poetry reading was nothing like a lecture, or any other

herself as a modern secular Jew, has rejected the overt non-spiritualizing Judaism of her Zionist background. Sedakova, on the other hand, is very much identified with Russian Orthodoxy. Her sensitive but very modern poetry is well known, both here in Russia and beyond its borders.

Hushed expectation

Later in the evening I discovered that she works at Moscow State University within the same philosophy faculty where we teach; we had never met, although this is perhaps not so surprising, since there are more than 15 sub-faculties, and she is mostly engaged in research.

The evening began with a number of reflections on the work of Sedakova, given by well-known professors like Bibichien, whose presence did much to draw an audience of some 150 people. When the actual moment for the reading came, the atmosphere had been

to satisfy those present, and the encore consisted of not only another two sets of poems from the collection but of new poetry recently composed by both Bar-Yosef and Sedakova. A short discussion followed, with some opportunity for questions and answers. By far the most interesting was the contribution of Anna, who played such a significant role in the birth of the project, and in organizing this evening.

Balancing earlier reflections more particularly focused on Sedakova's poetry, Anna's talk helped the audience appreciate Bar-Yosef's accomplishment. She explained how Bar-Yosef had taken the modern Hebrew language and, in order to reflect the strong spirituality of Sedakova's work, had given it a special touch by using language going back to the Septuagint and New Testament period.

In closing, Bar-Yosef remarked on the significance of this evening. This wasn't only a highlight in the work of the Judaica project. It wasn't only a

Here in Russia
the poet is looked
upon as someone
not far removed
from a bard
or prophet.

This statue
of the famous
Russian poet
Alexander Pushkin
(1799-1837)
stands
in Pushkin Square
in Moscow.

PHOTO: KAYMINI/STRAA



waiting area had revived us, and we soon found we had some amazing interests in common, both in educational work and in Russian literature.

Bar-Yosef was on her way from Israel to teach modern Hebrew poetry at the Russian State University for the Humanities. She planned to be in Moscow for two months, joining the small staff of the Judaica project there. She had heard of the project when lecturing in New York about two years ago, and had offered her services. Since the academic year in Israel starts much later, in Novem-

academic gathering. Here in Russia the poet is looked upon as someone not far removed from a bard or prophet. And Russians expect good poetry to engender an experience which is spiritual, and moving.

But this was more. Here we had two women, both outstanding, recognized poets in their own right, representing not only two different countries, but also two very different spiritual traditions.

Bar-Yosef, though she regards

well prepared. The room was hushed in expectation. The audience listened carefully, even reverently, expecting from these poets the words which would embody in a memorable and enlightening way their own experiences, their views and feelings.

A touch of greatness

From the collection of some 30 poems they read about a dozen. It was clearly not enough

special celebration of poetry. This was the kind of evening worthy of the great, if not the very greatest. Russian philosopher, Solov'ev, Against the background of a strong revival of nationalistic fervor, embodied most infamously in recent legislation on religion, this is the kind of event which gives hope for the future.

Dr. Wendy Elgersma Helleman, a member of First Christian Reformed Church in Toronto, currently is teaching in the faculty of philosophy at Moscow State University.

News

Preacher gives gospel contemporary pizzazz

Dan Wooding

BELLFLOWER, Calif. — New Zealand-born Ray Comfort's creative ideas are causing quite a stir around the world. Comfort cut his evangelistic teeth preaching for 12 years in the open air in Christchurch, New Zealand. This background has helped him to now reach from his present southern California base, through our comfort zone, and into the lives of many with his unique presentation of the gospel.

Here is a sample of Ray Comfort's writing: "A traveling evangelist from a popular evangelistic association was found dead, after he hanged himself. The respected preacher, who was responsible for the organization's financial accounts, was overcome with remorse after a personal financial deal turned sour. Following his death it was revealed by his superior that he had been stealing from the company's assets. Do you know the name of this well-known preacher? Nowadays he might be known as J. I. Simonson, more commonly known to most of us as Judas Iscariot, son of Simon."

The above "item" is one of a number of shocking headlines and stories from Ray Comfort's tabloid parody, *Natural Enquiry News*, one of more than 30 popular gospel publications called "Supertracts" — publications that are so appealing, non-Christians have been known to steal them.

According to Comfort, one pastor in Dallas, Texas, took Comfort's tabloid parody, *Natural Enquiry News* into his pulpit and said, "I am going to read some details of a publication that is on sale in this country: 'Man Cuts Up Raped Wife, Woman's Body Savaged By Vicious Dogs! Woman Pins Man To Ground With Tent Peg Through Head. Fat Man Found Murdered On Bathroom Floor!'"

Comfort went on: "His congregation gasped in shock that such a work would be freely available — until he revealed that these were incidents taken directly from the Bible. He then explained from the tract that the Scriptures don't hide the atrocities of humanity, but reveal them, warning that God would eventually have his Day of Justice, and that each of us needs to seek his mercy before that Day."

No more boredom

"The days of boring gospel literature are over," says Comfort, director of Living Waters Publications, the non-profit publishers of Supertracts. "We live in a generation that has a very limited attention span. If literature doesn't grip them, they will not bother with it."

He cites one item that people will bother with, "The Wallet," is one of a line of more than 30 unique titles that looks much like a wallet. Comfort says that people have actually stolen it from the back pockets of youth groups who have taken them to



Ray Comfort

rock concerts. Comfort revealed that he purposely dropped "The Wallet" onto the floor while he was speaking to his English-born wife on the phone from Salt Lake City airport. He then saw a man staring at the tract, place his case on top of it, scoop it up and quickly walk into the distance.

'High-tech'

Another title which is at present being designed is the "Smart Card." This is a high-tech-looking publication with a small silver-colored box on its front, above which are the words, "Character Test: place your thumb on the box for three to five seconds. If you are a good person, the box will turn a greenish blue." Of course, nothing happens, and on the reverse side the publication explains that the Bible teaches that "no one is truly good but God."

Comfort states that thousands of individuals and churches are gaining a new enthusiasm to

share their faith because of the uniqueness of Supertracts. "This gives us great satisfaction," he says, "especially when we hear of ones 'getting saved,' such as the following letter we received from Israel."

It read: "A 17-year-old Israeli boy, Roi (which translates 'my shepherd') from Tel-Aviv, picked up half a 'Mad as Hell' tract which had been torn, separating top from bottom. He was very interested in what he read, so he searched the streets for a full tract, which he eventually found in the trash. He read it with interest and was desperately trying to make contact with an evangelist friend of ours whose phone number is on the tract. He must have called about eight times before he got through. They met up in Tel-Aviv. Roi was truly converted. He gobbles up the Word and has a passion to reach out to others. Please keep him in your prayers."

Ray Comfort is particularly enthusiastic about what he believes is a first-of-its-kind publication. This is "The International Tract," a publication that can communicate the gospel to those who do not speak English. "What has not been a possibility in the past has now been made possible thanks to the rise of internationally recognized symbols," he said. "With this publication you can now communicate the entire gospel in picture form — from Genesis through to the resurrection, to someone who doesn't speak your language — concluding with John 3:16 in the 27 most read languages in the world."

"That's the best news about the Good News since the advent of the printing press! That means that when you see a Russian, a Japanese person, a Frenchman, or even a Martian, you can put a clear presentation of the Gospel into his hands — and he will understand it."

Its richly colored graphics have been designed to have cultural sensitivity, with generic features, clothes and skin color. The International Tract which is 32 pages, has its entire contents in full color. The cover depicts the earth from space (supplied by NASA), and the illustrations were penned by talented graphic artist Paul Clarkson.

Comfort's books and ministry have been commended by David Wilkerson, D. James Kennedy, James Robison, Leonard Ravenhill and many other Christian leaders. In the past he has shared motivational principles at John MacArthur's The Master's College, Biola University, Christ For The Nations and Yale University, but now he says that he has laid out everything he knows in one set of 18 videos that hundreds of churches are using to train their people. His videos were seen by 30,000 pastors in 1992.

Ray Comfort who says he was "born twice" in New Zealand, is now an American citizen, and is living permanently in southern California with his wife, Sue. They have three grown children. He is on staff at a Calvary Chapel church — Hosanna Chapel, pastored by Garry Amsdell — in an itinerant capacity.

Comfort was converted in 1972, and in 1974 began preaching open-air in "Speaker's Corner" in the city of Christchurch almost daily for 12 years. Preaching outdoors over 3,000 times gave him experience which he now uses to equip Christians around the world to effectively share their faith. He has written over 30 books (including, *Hell's Best Kept Secret* (Whitaker House), and has been trusted by pastors to minister in over 500 churches throughout the world.

For a free catalogue of what is available, write to: Living Waters Publications, PO Box 1172, Bellflower, CA 90706, USA, or, in North America, phone: (800) 437 1893.

Dan Wooding is a British journalist now based in southern California where he is also the founder and international director of ASSIST (Aid to Special Saints in Strategic Times).

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Lessons out of a cage



Jen VanderBeek

I didn't think I'd be able to handle it. Their daughter developed asthma and the doctor suggested pets as a possible cause and the budgie was at the opposite end of the pointing finger and that's how it ended up in our front room. On trial. A cage and a sack of bird feed and a mirror to dangle from the chain in the middle.

Birds belong outside. In the wild. Free to catch the waves of wind that soar them up to the heavens. To fly — for isn't that, after all, why birds were created?

I didn't think that having a bird in the house in a cage would ever find rest in that part of me that longs to catch the wind and soar too.

But the chirping peeps of its singing surprise me almost every time. Not much of a life, what with hopping from wooden peg to wooden peg. And twisting its head side to side before the mirror. And scrambling through the little bucket of seed rummaging for the best kind.

Astonishing. A life with clipped wings and still finding cause to sing!

Only a bird

So I recage the bird in my own dark confinement and bind it with my assumptions. Bird brain doesn't know any better. Low intelligence and having its elements monitored and its needs supplied by superior beings is enough cause for the thing to sing. It's the least it can do. Thing doesn't know any better than captivity. Was bred for captivity. Even needs cap-

tivity. It doesn't know what it is missing in the first place. It is happier in the cage. It would not survive out of the cage.

But I watch the bird now. Its wings are flapping wildly and noisily. Its voice sends out an urgent call. You see, the cage sits on a table low near the front window. Outside the window the dull, brown, little creatures that hop and peck at the seeds in and around the feeder are tightening the space of the bright yellow and green spirit that is feeling the press of captivity. The little brown ones don't see the cage through the glass or recognize the high loud scraw coming from in the house. At least, they pretend not to see or hear.

Kindness? Would it be kind to unlatch the little wire door and open the window and leave the room? It is cold out there. Or would it be kinder to move the bird feeder further out into the yard? Away from the window and out of sight? Move the hurrying reminders of freedom out of sight. Out of mind.

Or would it be kinder to go to the pet store and get another little yellow and green one to share the mirror and the seeds? A support group of two?

More than one way

I am still sitting here not listening to the call of those things that keep me from soaring. I will listen, but first I watch the little bird. The brown flock swept away in a winged rush just now with the stiff breeze that shook the bush there and startled them. The little yellow and green bird is busy preening and quite acting as though it has had no other concern apart from grooming all this time. There is, after all, the mirror it must face.

And I am still not resolved in my own flapping turmoil here about how I will push out the walls of its captivity to try to fit some freedom there into that cage.

And then the bird sings. Surprises me again. Chin up and trilling in praise, it sings. Stops all its pecking and preening and hopping and flapping and it sings, filling itself and the room and even me with its song.

So why am I stunned and choked and what's this tear here on my cheek?

I just learned something. When creation was unaided precisely and magnificently by our God there was given to birds more than one way to soar to the heavens.

Simple? But I never knew. A little budgie in a cage sang me the song of a second way.

I have to go now. There is a wooden peg set right there, a little higher and closer to heaven, and if I hop just right...

Jen VanderBeek is a freelance writer and mother of five. With her pastor husband, Peter, she lives in Forest, Ont. Jen will be writing a once a month column for CC that will reflect through the medium of storytelling on her everyday experiences.

Colson's Prison Fellowship opens first Christian prison program in U.S.

HOUSTON, Tex. (EP) — Prison Fellowship has opened the first completely Christian prison program in the United States. Located near Sugar Land, Texas, outside of Houston, the Jester II Unit has been converted to a Christ-centered prison with the full blessing of the state of Texas.

"Now it's time to prove that Christ changes lives," said Prison Fellowship founder Chuck Colson. "We have named this new pilot prison program 'InnerChange' because it represents the complete transformation that can take place within the walls of a prison, as well as within the heart of a prisoner."

Colson continued, "This is our chance to demonstrate that Christ changes lives, and that changing prisoners from the inside out is the only crime-prevention program that really works. If we are successful, I really believe that prison doors all across America will be flung wide open to the Gospel in a way we have only dreamed about before."

Heart change means life change

All prisoners in InnerChange participate voluntarily, have two years or less remaining on their sentences, and are approved for a minimum-security prison. They will participate in a two-year program designed to heal their relationships with God, the community, and their families.

"Normally, the idea of merging government and church programs would hit the headlines like a torpedo, but states are lagging under the cost of corrections and nationwide the recidivism [return to prison] rate is at 70 per cent," said Colson. "This is a real chance for inmates to move forward into community service rather than back behind bars."



Charles Colson

Texas Gov. George W. Bush joined Colson in inaugurating the program. "I can't tell you how thankful I am that the State of Texas is the first state in the union to recognize that if you change a person's heart, you can change [his or her] life," Bush said after touring the facility. "That's exactly what InnerChange is doing. It says each person counts, each person has a heart, soul and conscience."

Bush told inmates, "This is a model program for the nation — because of your willingness to change your hearts, you've paved the way for others. I appreciate you all for your participation — we're all in this together."

Bush added, "I am absolutely convinced this program will work. When these inmates show the rest of the country that they can change their hearts and become good, productive citizens, I am convinced others will follow. There is no telling how many lives will be saved by what is happening here."

A similar program affiliated with Prison Fellowship in Brazil has reported a dramatic reduction in the repeat-offender rate from 75 per cent to the single digits.

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Agriculture

Sunday is not a rest day for livestock farmers

I'm trying to think... when was the last time I had a weekend off from milking cows and doing farm chores? Have I ever had a Sunday off? Have I ever slept in past 6 a.m.?

Let's see, there were a few times when I did some travelling, but that was back in the 1980s. There were a few times when I was sick with an upset stomach and the flu but still managed to do all the daily farm chores. No, I have never had a Sunday off as long as I've been a farmer. And I never slept in after 6 a.m., because the dairy cows would be very upset and uncomfortable if I had.

No backup

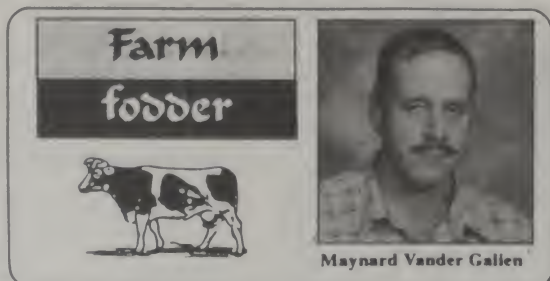
I've worked alone for most of my single adult life. It's almost impossible to get someone skilled in milking cows on short notice. There's no backup help available. And going away on vacation or a weekend and leaving the dairy operation in the hands of someone else is stressful. It takes a very skilled person to run a dairy operation and care for livestock.

Take last Sunday, for example. A steel gate inside my livestock barn separating the year-old heifers and steers was somehow opened by the animals. They were able to open the chain link hook that ties the gate to the feeder front. Twenty-seven animals were now cohabiting in one big place and "horsing around."

I usually tie a wire through the chain link so the animals can't open the gate with their heads, noses or tongues. I don't know how they get the chain link over the T-hook.

Careful, deliberate work

I didn't put a wire through this chain link. So my afternoon task was to separate the animals — heifers on one side and steers on the other side of the large pen. It would be a fairly easy job for two people. Alone, it takes patience and the right moves learned from a lifetime of farming.



Maynard Vander Galien

I pocketed a red marker spray can and an old broom handle and got inside the pen of cattle. I marked all the heifers with a shot of spray as I walked slowly among the cattle. Then with stick in hand I gently moved some heifers to the far side and locked them in by closing a gate.

They were ushered into the back pen. More heifers and steers were sorted out that way and in about 20 minutes everyone was back in his or her own pen. No animals were chased, hit with the stick or shouted at. No animal got nervous or excited.

If I had tried to do a rush job before church and thought I could separate them in five minutes or so, it would have been stressful for both livestock and me.

Those aching knees

Non-farmers probably don't realize how much more work dairy farmers do before morning or evening worship service. Feeding the livestock outside and feeding the young cattle inside is done late Saturday afternoon or Saturday night so as to lessen the work load on Sunday morning.

From the moment I get up Sunday morning (between 5 and 5:30) I work at a fast clip. Then it's a quick bath to get the barn and silage odors off my hair and skin.

I grin when our minister, in his congregational prayer, gives thanks to God for Sunday, a day of rest, so we can re-charge our batteries. A day of rest? Re-charge our batteries? Not for farmers.

Maynard Vander Galien is an Ottawa Valley dairy farmer. Don't feel sorry for him. At 48, he's retiring from milking cows in the new year and will raise beef and cash crops.

Best approach to managing nutrients found among peers, farmers say

GUELPH, Ont. (CCFO) — Members of the Christian Farmers Federation of Ontario are firmly committed to the principle that plans for managing the nutrients found in manure and other crop inputs are best left up to the judgment of a farmer's peers.

At a recent meeting of the CCFO's provincial board, farmers from across the province voted in favor of a resolution calling for the CCFO to be instrumental, along with other farm groups and the government, in the development and implementation of a peer review process for nutrient management plans.

Nutrient management plans are being investigated in several municipalities as a way of ensuring that water supplies do not become contaminated. They call on farmers to document how much manure their operations produce, the characteristics of farms' fields, the best times to spread manure or crop inputs on fields, and so on. The current expansion in many parts of the livestock industry is driving the concern.

"There have been some suggestions that nutrient management plans be done by professional agrologists," said John Markus, the CCFO's president. "However, the farming community has had very good experience using peer review in programs like the Environmental Farm Plan."

"Defending your farming practices in front of another farmer is more effective than

most people realize. Over time, peer review sets higher standards than other approaches."

Needed, but 'no magic pill'

A second resolution was passed by the CCFO which calls for nutrient management plans to be used for all farming practices.

"Livestock producers are currently under scrutiny for their farm management practices," noted Jasper Vanderbas, a CCFO director. "But producers of crops like corn and soybeans also apply inputs to the soil and need to pay careful attention to their management practices. All farmers need to pay attention to their stewardship of soil, water and air."

And while nutrient management plans are viewed by the CCFO's provincial board as a good stewardship initiative, there is also a wide realization that actions always speak louder than words.

"Most farmers are already good environmental stewards and hopefully nutrient management plans and peer review will go a long way toward raising the standard for the very small minority of those who have taken their task as seriously as they should," said Bob Bedgood, a CCFO vice president. "Nutrient management plans are not a magic pill to solve all our stewardship problems, but they are a way of drawing attention to the management of our resources."

New publication to offer unique window on Ontario family farmers

GUELPH, Ont. (CFFO) — It's not often you go to your mailbox to look through a window! However, farmers from across the province will soon be able to do just that with the

launch of a new farm publication called *Earthkeeping Ontario*.

"*Earthkeeping Ontario* will be a window on family farm entrepreneurs," notes publisher

Elbert van Donkersgoed of the Christian Farmers Federation of Ontario (CFFO). "It will be a unique window that highlights the family, the faith and values — not just the economic opportunities — which underlie the farm management decisions they make and the agricultural policies they support."

Published in a joint venture with a partner, *Earthkeeping Ontario* will be contained within the pages of another publication called *agri-food IMPACT*. The joint venture will be published six times a year and will be distributed free of charge to all Ontario field crop producers, including the members and farm

business registrants of the Christian Farmers Federation.

"The CFFO has an important story to tell and we launched a new publication in order to tell that story well," says van Donkersgoed. "Now over 40,000 farmers across the province will be reading our message of stewardship and values."

As a result of the new publication, staff responsibilities have shifted within the CFFO. In addition to his current position as CFFO's executive director, Elbert van Donkersgoed also takes on the responsibilities of publisher for *Earthkeeping Ontario*. Martin Oldengarm, the CFFO's member/district co-or-

ordinator, adds the tasks of advertising and sponsorship manager for *Earthkeeping Ontario*.

John Clement, who's responsible for the CFFO's boards, committees, and communications adds the tasks of financial, personnel and office management to his job description. His job position has been changed to general manager.

Nellie van Donkersgoed, who has been responsible for several CFFO district-related activities, plus graphics and layout work, assumes the position of editor for *Earthkeeping Ontario*.

Cathy Pater now adds committees and districts to her job description.

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| | Anniversaries  Franeker Brampton Fr., the Neth. Ont. With thankfulness in our hearts to God we share with you the news that on Dec. 2, 1997, D.V., our parents FLORENCE VAN DER GRAAF and PIETER VEENSTRA hope to celebrate their 60th anniversary! Ted & Tina Veenstra — Hainan, China Dorothy & Rien Keijzer — Zeist, the Neth. John & Lise Veenstra — Mississauga, Ont. Jack Veenstra — Tennessee, U.S.A. Fred & Hazel Veenstra — Owen Sound, Ont. Bill & Lucy Veenstra — Maple Ridge, B.C. and all their grandchildren and great-grandchildren. Psalm 90:17 | Obituaries On Oct. 29, 1997, the Lord took home our dear father, grandfather and great-grandfather JOHN KNOOP at the age of 89 years. Beloved husband of Ann who resides in Lynnwood Nursing Home, Edmonton, Alta. Ten children, 33 grandchildren and 23 great-grandchildren mourn this loss. Jack Knoop — Edmonton, Alta. Harry & Shirley Knoop — Edmonton, Alta. Greta & Mannus Meyennik — Edmonton, Alta. Corneli Knoop — Edmonton, Alta. Anne & Bruce Coulson — Burlington, Ont. Joanne & Jack Van Twuyver — Edmonton, Alta. John & Maria Knoop — Fort Saskatchewan, Sask. Henry & Janet Knoop — Bowmanville, Ont. Jeannie Tiemessen — London, Ont. Ed Knoop — Edmonton, Alta. Correspondence address: Harry Knoop, 8608-184 Str., Edmonton, AB T5T 1J9 | Church News Christian Reformed Church Calls extended: — Ottewell CRC, Edmonton, Alta. Rev. Fred Heeslinga of First CRC, Hamilton, Ont. Calls declined: — First CRC, Guelph, Ont., Rev. Jake Kuipers of First CRC, Sarnia, Ont. | "Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we rejoice in the hope of glory of God" (Rom. 5:1-2). So unexpected, the Lord called home on Sunday, Nov. 9, 1997, our dear brother-in-law WIEBE VANDER GAAST We grieve with Hottie and her children in this loss. Don & Ann VanderMeer — Oshawa, Ont. Auke & Corne VanderMeer — Blackstock, Ont. Evelyn VanderMeer — Exeter, Ont. Sjoer & Edna VanderMeer — Hickson, Ont. Rose & Peter Feddema — Bowmanville, Ont. Adnan & Wilma VanderMeer — Lethbridge, Alta. Veme & Ivan Joosse — Newmarket, Ont. and nieces and nephews. Predeceased by Sieds VanderMeer. |
| Miscellaneous Peace of mind + Stewardship in a new book Family Documents Record the location of your documents and possessions in one place for your family and executors. AT COLES CHAPTERS HERITAGE Softcover \$9.95 Hardcover \$24.95 By mail add \$2.00 S&H to cheque Waterside House Publishing 714 Vine St. St. Catharines, ON L2M 6Z6 Tel. 905-935-5047 | Personal ONE TO ANOTHER Christian companion magazine. Hundreds of readers Canada-wide. Single issue \$5. Write to: #12 923 2nd Ave. S. Lethbridge, AB T1J 0C7 | For Rent Cottage for rent in scenic Holten (Holland) Contact: Andy Borger (905) 623-6049. | Teachers KITCHENER, Ont.: Laurentian Hills Chr. School invites applications for a maternity leave situation during the 1997/98 school year. A full-time Grade 2 classroom teacher position for all subjects including French. This position to commence early to mid-February. Interested parties may reply with C.V. to Mr. Luke Janssen, Principal Laurentian Hills Chr. School 11 Laurentian Dr. Kitchener, ON N2E 1C1 | Interested in placing an ad. Call us for details. |

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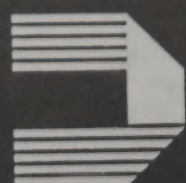
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| <p>Nederlandse Kerstzangdienst</p> <p>Emmanuel Reformed Church 170 Clarke Street North Woodstock, ON</p> <p>Tel.: (519) 537-6422</p> <p>Nederlandse Kerstzangdienst met medewerking van het Kerkkoor</p> <p>Wij hopen, D.V., twee diensten te houden:</p> <p>Een traditionele zangdienst, Zondag, 7 december 1997 7.30 n.m.</p> <p>Zangdienst met Nederlandse jeugd Zondag, 14 december 1997 7.30 n.m.</p> <p>VERVERSINGEN NA DE DIENST</p> | <p>Student Financial Aid (Classis Chatham)</p> <p>Any student from Classis Chatham (Chr. Ref. Church) who has applied to Calvin Seminary or its S.P.M.C. Program for the purpose of full-time ministry in the CRC and who is in need of financial assistance for the coming academic year is asked to request application forms from the Secretary, Mrs. Suzanna Westerhof, 9772 Gold Creek Drive, Komoka, ON N0L 1R0. The completed application form must be in the hands of the secretary no later than February 13, 1998, or the application will not be processed. Also, first time applicants should reserve the evening of March 2, 1998, for an interview with the Student Fund Committee.</p> <p>Investment Stewardship Program</p> <p><i>A joint venture of the Ontario Alliance of Christian Schools and Bick Financial Security Corporation</i></p> <p>An Investment Program with a Bonus</p> <p><i>By investing with Bick Financial you:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • meet your financial objectives • support your local Christian school • fund Christian curriculum development <p>Contact: George VanArragon BICK FINANCIAL SECURITY CORPORATION 241 Wilson Street East, Ancaster, Ontario L9G 2B8 (905) 648-9559 or 888-777-2425 (888-RSP-BICK)</p> | <p>Join The Alliance Team!!</p> <p>Due to the retirement of a staff member and the expansion of services to our member schools, the Ontario Alliance of Christian Schools invites applications for the following positions:</p> <p>EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT The required skills and experience include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * database planning and development; <i>Microsoft Access</i>; * organizational management, scheduling, and communication; * responsibilities directly supporting the Executive Director. <p>INTERNET CO-ORDINATOR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * knowledge and skills about website maintenance and development; * intranet structures and functions; * experience with electronic communication. <p>PUBLICATIONS ASSISTANT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * proofreading, editing, reformatting and general enhancement of OACS; * curriculum documents; * familiarity with <i>Windows 95</i>, <i>WordPerfect</i>; * desktop publishing skills are required. <p>Full/part-time combinations will be considered. For further information call (905) 648-2100.</p> <p>The deadline for applications is Dec. 15, 1997. All applications should be in the form of a letter with appropriate accompanying support materials and documentation. Please send to:</p> <p>Dr. Adrian Guldmond, Executive Director Ontario Alliance of Christian Schools 617 Highway 53 East Ancaster, ON L9G 3K9 E-mail: ag@aocs.org Internet: www.oacs.org</p>  |
| <p>Miscellaneous</p> <p>The Dutch Market 544 Queen St., Chatham, Ont. Phone: (519) 352-2831 Fax: (519) 352-6533</p> <p>Specializing in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gouda Cheeses & Deli Meats • Imported Chocolate & Licorice • Soups & Indonesian Foods • Cookies & Cakes • Delft Blue Giftware <p>Bringing a World of Fine Products to Your Neighborhood!</p>  <p>Visit us at www.dutchmarket.com</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recipes • Contests • Kids' Gallery • History of Sinterklaas • and more... | <p>Attractive Investment</p> <p>1 year: 5.5 % 2 years: 6.5 % 5 years: 7.0 %</p> <p>Successful real estate partnership for 17 years seeks private investment loans. \$10,000 minimum.</p> <p>Contact our Chartered Accountant John Vleeming, C.A. 325 Estate Dr., Sherwood Park, AB T8B 1L8 Phone: (403) 449-6143 Fax: (403) 417-2075</p> | <p>Events</p> <p>"KOMT ALLEN TEZAMEN"</p> <p>Join us with many guest artists for a Dutch Christmas evening of song and praise at Redeemer College, Ancaster, Ont., on Dec. 13, 1997, at 7:30 p.m.</p> <p>Organists: Fred Deys and Hans Schouls String quartet: Erin, Ben, Brittany and Brielle Goheen Solos: Karin Boonstra and Dick DeKleine Choir: "Adoramus/Maranatha" Reader: Mary Ann Wunsche Meditation: Rev. H.R. DeBolster (Freewill offering for Redeemer College)</p> <p>For information call: (905) 304-1614</p> |



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Summerland-CHOR.....8:00am 1450
Vernon-CJIB.....9:30pm 940

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High River-CHRB.....6:30pm 1280
Edmonton - CKER.....11:00pm 101.9

SASKATCHEWAN

Estevan-CJSL.....8:00am 1280
Weyburn-CFSL.....8:00am 1190

MANITOBA

Altona-CFAM.....9:30am 950
Steinbach-CHSM.....9:30am 1250
Winnipeg-CKJS.....9:15am 810

ONTARIO

Atikokan-CFAK.....9:30am 1240

Chatham-CFCO.....6:30am 630
Fort Frances-CFOB.....9:30am 640
Guelph - CJOY.....8:30am 1460
Hamilton-CHAM.....7:30am 820
Kapusking-CKAP.....7:00am 580
Kingston-WLKC.....7:30am 100.7
Newmarket-CKDX.....9:30am 88.5
Oshawa-CKDO.....8:00am 1350
Owen Sound-CFOS.....10:30am 560
Pembroke-CHVR.....10:00am 96.7
Samia-CHOK.....7:30am 1070
Stratford-CJCS.....8:45am 1240
Windsor-CKLW.....8:30am 580
Wingham-CKNX.....10:30am 920
Woodstock-CKDK (fm).....8:00am 102.3

NEW BRUNSWICK

Saint John-CHSJ.....9:30am 700

PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

Charlottetown-CFCY.....7:00am 630

NOVA SCOTIA

Digby-CKDY.....6:00am 1420
Kentville-CKEN.....8:30am 1490
Middleton-CKAD.....8:30am 1350
New Glasgow-CKEC.....7:30am 1320
Sydney-CJCB.....8:00am 1270
Weymouth-CKDY.....8:30am 103.1
Windsor-CFAB.....8:30am 1450

TELEVISION:

Faith 20-TV

(Monday to Friday)

Check your local listings for cable outlets airing Faith 20.

Alberta - Lethbridge - CJLL
.....Thursday - 9:00pm
.....Saturday - 12:00noon

Vision-TV

(every Saturday)

British Columbia.....7:00&10:00pm
Alberta.....8:00 & 11:00pm
Sask. & Manitoba.....6:00 & 9:00pm
Ontario & Quebec.....7:00 & 10:00pm
Nfld., N.B., N.S. & P.E.I. 8:00 & 11:00pm



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Calendar of Events

Please submit only brief items. Placement is subject to space availability. Lengthy, multiple-event announcements will be rejected. We reserve the right to edit the material and to charge a nominal, per issue fee per item inserted.

Nov. 21 J.S. Bach's "Magnificat" and other selected works will be performed by the RC Concert Choir, accompanied by orchestra, at Redeemer College, Ancaster, Ont. Don't miss this! Info./tickets: (905) 648-2131.

Nov. 22 Giant bazaar, 10 a.m.-9 p.m., Calvin Memorial Chr. School, 300 Scott St., St. Catharines, Ont. Children's games, baked goods, crafts and plants. Lunch, tea, supper are served. Fashion show at 2 p.m. Auction at 7 p.m. Info.: (905) 641-8872.

Nov. 22 "Finding the Light" conference on abuse, from 8:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m., East CRC, Strathroy, Ont. Keynote speaker: Beth Swagman. Info.: (519) 245-0253 or 245-0139.

Nov. 27 Annual "Hymn Sing" in the Dutch language, 7:30 p.m., Holland Christian Homes, Brampton, Ont. Participants: Mattaniah Male Choir, organist Andre Knevel, trumpeter Jack 't Mannetje and song leader Lenny Dykstra. Refreshments, of course!

Nov. 28 First annual "Kerstzangdienst," 7 p.m., Maranatha CRC, St. Catharines, Ont. Participants: Rev. J. Kuntz and organist Lydia Van Huizen. All are welcome. Refreshments and fellowship!

Dec. 4-6 The RC Theatre Arts Dept. presents its fall mainstage production of "Scrooge... and other Yuletide Yarns," directed by Kip Edinborough Longstaff. At Redeemer College, Ancaster, Ont. Dec. 4-5: 7:30 p.m.; Dec. 6: 2 p.m. and 7:30 p.m. Info./tickets: (905) 648-2131.

Dec. 7 "Nederlandse Kerstzangdienst," 7:30 p.m., Emmanuel Ref. Church, 170 Clarke St. N., Woodstock, Ont. Youth service will be held Dec. 14, 7:30 p.m. Info.: (519) 537-6422 (#)

Dec. 13 Dutch Christmas evening of song and praise with many guest artists, 7:30 p.m., Redeemer College, Ancaster, Ont. Info.: (905) 304-1614 (#)

Dec. 13-20 Christmas concert series by the Ont. Chr. Music Assembly (Leendert Kooij, director), with Andre Knevel at the organ. Dec. 13: Melrose United Church, Hamilton, Ont.; Dec. 17: Maranatha CRC, Bowmanville, Ont.; Dec. 20: Willowdale United Church, Willowdale, Ont. Info.: (905) 775-2230. (#)

Dec. 14 Dutch worship service led by Rev. J. Groen, 3 p.m., CRC, Ancaster, Ont.

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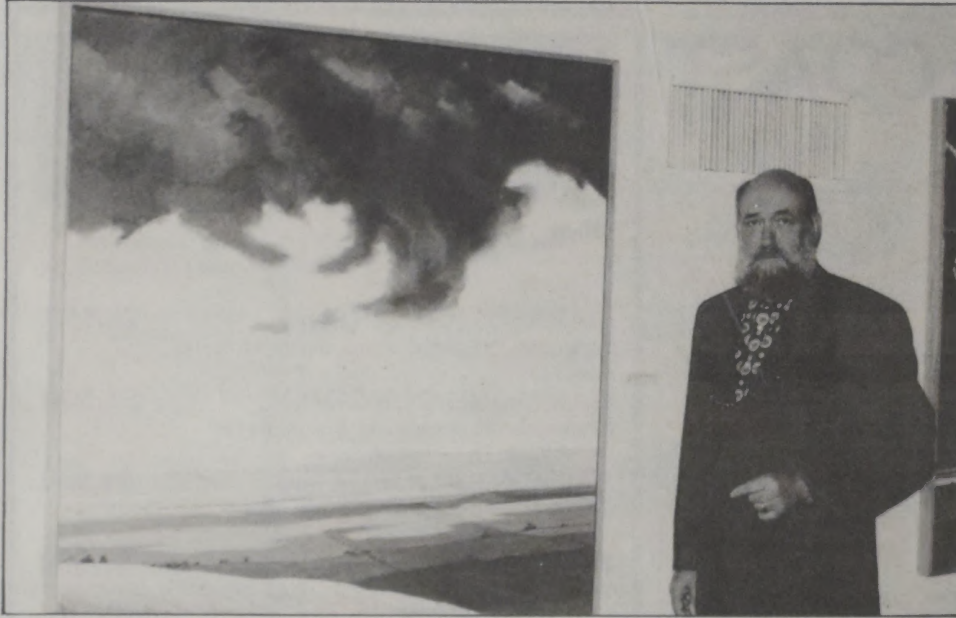
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News

Artist tries to respond to God's earth and sky talk



Chris Stoffel Overvoorde with his oil landscape, *Clouds Breaking Near Fort McLeod, Alberta*.

Bert Witvoet

ANCASTER, Ont. — Chris Stoffel Overvoorde was in southern Ontario last week to show his impressions of parts of Alberta. He used a collection of drawings, watercolors and oil paintings to bring across the spaciousness and beauty of the prairie landscape and the Rocky Mountains.

Entitled "Western Landscapes," the exhibition continues through December 4 at the Redeemer College Art Gallery.

Known as a graphic designer, stage designer, muralist, print-maker and painter, this emeritus professor of art at Calvin College, Grand Rapids, Mich., is especially known for his "cloudscapes" and now, "prairiescapes," in which clouds also feature prominently.

Overvoorde can be quite over-

come with the beauty of creation, to the point where, as happened to him at the Grand Canyon, he could not draw. The scene was just too overwhelming, he recalls.

"It's ludicrous to try to capture God's revelation on paper or canvass," he told an audience at the opening of the exhibition. "But you try to respond anyway."

Getting into it

He certainly does not think anyone can do justice to a landscape by just driving through it. That's why he and his wife, Greta, spend days or weeks at a certain locale to capture the feel of it (Greta sews, reads or takes walks, but always accompanies her husband on his painting trips).

Overvoorde starts by drawing.

Drawing a scene helps him understand and get into the landscape, he says. From there he often moves to watercolors and then to oil paintings. His oil paintings are usually large. The ones at Redeemer are four by four feet, medium size for him.

Taking color photos before painting tends to confuse him, says Overvoorde. The colors are never true. Instead he relies on notes and memory, always simplifying what he really saw. That's why some of his oils tend to have flattened colors, and emphasis is on shapes and volume rather than on details.

But the overall impression, especially in his oil "South West of Vulcan, Alberta" is that animals and human settlements are dwarfed by the beauty of earth and sky and addressed by their unseen Creator.



Two Overvoorde landscapes: top: Herd Near Waterton Park, Alberta (pencil), bottom: Knight's Lake, Waterton, Alberta (watercolor).

News Digest

No vestiges of religion allowed

HILLSBOROUGH, N.J. (EP) — Is Halloween a religious holiday? A New Jersey school board said Yes, and under a new school policy that forbids celebration of holidays with religious overtones, it has banned Halloween.

The Hillsborough school board noted that Halloween grew out of All Hallow's Eve, which was the day before the Christian holy day, All Saint's Day.

The board will permit the

annual costume parade at Woodfern school, but only as part of a newly named "fall festival celebration." St. Valentine's Day is also slated to be replaced by "Special Person Day," and Christmas and Hanukkah have already been replaced by a generic seasonal celebration.

Receipt refers to Solomon's temple

NEW YORK, N.Y. (AP) — An ancient "receipt" recorded on pottery has been discovered that may contain the oldest mention outside the Bible of King

Solomon's temple. The nine-by-10 cm artifact is almost 3,000 years old, dating to a time when kings sent messages inscribed on pottery. The inscription indicates a Judean king sent it to demand a temple contribution of three shekels of silver.

Extensive testing has convinced several scholars of the receipt's authenticity. "This does not prove the Bible, but it does vividly provide a context and a reality to the world of the Bible," says Hershel Shanks, editor of *Biblical Archaeology Review*, which reported the find.

Tax-hating Appalachian town disbands

CASTLEWOOD, Va. (AP) — Voters in a small town were so fed up with local taxes they decided recently to dissolve the town government. "The town should never have been formed in the first place and we don't want it," said Mayor Roy Castle. "It was double taxation without representation."

A majority of adults in the southwest Virginia town voted in a referendum in favor of discarding the town charter. A Russell County judge and the state

legislature must approve the reversion, which the Virginia Municipal League believes is unprecedented.

Just six years ago, voters asked the legislature to let the community become a town so it could provide services and build a sewer system to attract industry. But this spring, residents elected a mayor and six council members who campaigned with the promise of dismantling the town. The anti-town leaders have begun refunding \$88,000 worth of taxes to voters.